

# The LOVE R.

By MARMADUKE MYRTLE, Gent.

By W. Addison  
See Biographical  
Brit. I. 35.

—*Magis illa placent quæ pluris emuntur.*

Thursday, March 18. 1714.

I Have lately been very much teized with the Thought of Mrs. Anne Page, and the Memory of those many Cruelties which I suffered from that obdurate Fair one. Mrs. Anne was in a particular manner very fond of *China Ware*, against which I had unfortunately declared my Aversion. I do not know but this was the first Occasion of her Coldness towards me, which makes me sick at the very sight of a *China Dish* ever since. This is the best Introduction I can make for my present Discourse, which may serve to fill up a Gap till I am more at Leisure to resume the Thread of my Amours.

There are no Inclinations in Women which more surprise me than their Passions for Chalk and *China*. The first of these Maladies wears out in a little time; but when a Woman is visited with the second, it generally takes Possession of her for Life. *China Vessels* are play-things for Women of all Ages. An old Lady of fourscore shall be as busie in cleaning an *Indian Mandarin*, as her Great Grand Daughter is in dressing her Baby.

The common way of purchasing such Trifles, if I may believe my Female Informers, is by exchanging old Suits of Cloths for this brittle Ware. The Porters of *China* have, it seems, their Factors at this distance, who retail out their several Manufactures for cast Cloths and superannuated Garments. I have known an old Petticoat metamorphosed into a Punch Bowl, and a Pair of Breeches into a Tea Pot. For this reason my Friend Tradewell in the City calls his great Room, that is nobly furnished out with *China*, his Wife's Wardrobe. In yonder Corner, says he, are above twenty Suits of Cloths, (Price Two Pence.)

and on that Screwstare above a hundred yards of furbelow'd Silk. You cannot imagine how many Night-Gowns, Stays and Mantoes, went to the raising of that Pyramid. The worst of it is, says he, a Suit of Cloths is not suffered to last half its time, that it may be the more vendable, so that in reality this is but a more dextrous way of picking the Husband's Pocket, who is often purchasing a great vase of *China*, when he fancies that he is buying a fine Head, or a Silk Gown for his Wife. There is likewise another Inconvenience in this Female Passion for *China*, namely, that it administers to 'em great matter for Wrath and Sorrow. How much Anger and Affliction are produced daily in the Hearts of my dear Country Women, by the breach of this frail Furniture. Some of them pay half their Servants Wages in *China* Fragments, which their Carelessness has produced. If thou hast a piece of Earthen Ware, consider, says *Epictetus*, that it is a piece of Earthen Ware, and by consequence very easie and obnoxious to be broken: Be not therefore so void of Reason as to be angry or grieved when this comes to pass. In order, therefore, to exempt my fair Readers from such additional and supernumerary Calamities of Life, I wou'd advise them to forbear dealing in these perishable Commodities, till such time as they are Philosophers enough to keep their Temper at the fall of a Tea Pot or a *China* Cup. I shall further recommend to their serious Consideration these three Particulars: First, That all *China* Ware is of a weak and transitory Nature. Secondly, That the Fashion of it is changeable; and Thirdly, That it is of no use. And first of the First, The fragility of *China* is such as a reasonable Being



Being ought by no means to set its Heart upon, tho' at the same time I am afraid I may complain with *Seneca* on the like occasion, that this very Consideration recommends them to our Choice, our Luxury being grown so wanton, that this kind of Treasure becomes the more valuable, the more easily we may be deprived of it, and that it receives a Price from its brittleness. There is a kind of Ostentation in Wealth which sets the Possessors of it upon distinguishing themselves in those things where it is hard for the Poor to follow them. For this Reason I have often wondered that our Ladies have not taken Pleasure in Egg-shells, especially in those which are curiously stained and streaked, and which are so very tender that they require the nicest Hand to hold without breaking them. But as if the Brittleness of this Ware were not sufficient to make it Costly, the very Fashion of it is changeable, which brings me to my second Particular.

It may chance that a Piece of *China* may survive all those Accidents to which it is by Nature liable, and last for some Years if rightly situated and taken care of. To remedy, therefore, this Inconvenience, it is so ordered that the Shape of it shall grow unfashionable, which makes new Supplies always necessary, and furnishes Employment for Life to Women of great and generous Souls who cannot live out of the Mode. I may self remember when there were few *China* Vessels to be seen that held more than a Dish of Coffee, but their Size is so gradually enlarged, that there are many, at present, which are capable of holding half a Hoghead. The Fashion of the Tea Cup is also greatly altered, and has run through a wonderful Variety of Colour, Shape and Size.

But, in the last place, *China* Ware is of no Use. Who would not laugh to see a Smith's Shop furnished with Anvils and Hammers of *China*. The Furniture of a Ladies favourite Room is altogether as absurd: You see Jars of a prodigious Capacity that are to hold nothing. I have seen Horses and Herds of Cattel in this fine sort of Porcelain, not to mention the several *Chinese* Ladies who, perhaps, are naturally enough represented in these frail Materials.

Did our Women take delight in heaping up Piles of earthen Platters, brown Jugs, and the like useful Products of our *British* Potteries, there would be some Sense in it. They might be ranged in as fine Figures, and disposed of in as beautiful Pieces of Architecture; but there is an Objection to these which cannot be overcome, namely, that they would be of some Use, and might be taken down on all Occasions to be employed in Services of the Family, beside, that they are intolerably cheap, and most shamefully durable and lasting.

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